

Happy Days at Arlington Hall March 20

Arlington Hall Station (AHS), the headquarters of the Army's cryptologic service during World War II, was home to many brilliant and talented people. Many who worked there also were free spirits, some downright eccentric. The eclectic mix of people combined with the unusual nature of the mission, and the fact that many recent civilians were adjusting to military ways, made for some interesting times.

In late 1969 at NSA, Ed Fishel, who had begun his cryptologic career at AHS, became editor of a new Agency publication, *Cryptologic Spectrum*. As editor, he circulated a memo throughout NSA soliciting "personal yarns" and "windy stories" about AHS. To set the pace, Ed printed a few of his own; some of them are presented here. (NOTE: Ed was a product of his times, and all the stories he told were about men.)

In January 1941, Ed left his hometown, Alliance, Ohio, for Washington, hoping to parlay his skill as a ham radio operator into a commission in the Army Signal Corps. This did not happen, and within a few months he was drafted. His file noted that he had taken a course in cryptology, and in early 1942 was sent to Washington, D.C. to join the Signal Intelligence Agency (SIS).^{*} He had been working at the Fifth Corps headquarters in Columbus, Ohio, and his application for the SIS had been approved by Colonel Parker Hitt,^{**} the corps signal officer.

Fishel soon found himself at the Signal Corps school at Fort Monmouth, NJ, where his class was marched to and from their classroom by Corporal Lambros Callimahos (yes, *that* Lambros Callimahos). He inspected their barracks every morning at precisely 0430. After inspection, Callimahos marched directly out to change for breakfast, and, Fishel recalled, "the greatest tactical precision this outfit ever achieved" as tumbling back into bed for another hour's sleep seconds after Callimahos passed their bunks.

In the summer of 1942, a group of 24 enlisted men arrived at Arlington Hall from Fort Monmouth. They didn't yet have full security clearances, so they were put to work as perimeter guards (Arlington Hall was not yet fenced in). it was later

calculated that so many of that group had graduate degrees that it averaged out to two degrees per man. The 24 became known at AHS as the "Ph.D. Guard." Two members of that group, by the way, are now in the Cryptologic Hall of Honor --- Art Levenson and Sydney Jaffe.

Many of the personnel at AHS were there because they had scored high on the Army General Qualification Test, which was administered to all new inductees. The cryptologic school required a minimum score of 135 out of a possible 162, which meant they were in the one-tenth of 1% in the Army. Philip Patton had scored a 162.

Fishel remembered Second Lieutenant Arthur Levenson, who had a desk near the door of a large office. From time to time, a sergeant would open the door and shout something like "I need eight enlisted men to move some furniture." When this happened, Levenson would pull a 5-by-8 card out of his desk and make a tick mark on it. When asked what he was doing, Levenson would answer, "I'm keeping track of the number of times I've been glad I went to office candidate school."

Cryptologic Spectrum was merged with another publication, the *NSA Technical Journal*, to form *Cryptologic Quarterly*.

Ed Fishel wrote one of the definitive books on intelligence in the American Civil War, *The Secret War for the Union*. Noncirculating copies are available in the Library at the National Cryptologic Museum.

** During World War II, the SIS was reorganized and renamed the Signal Security Agency. At the end of the war, it became the Army Security Agency, and it is one of the predecessors of today's INSCOM.

** Parker Hitt was a pioneer American cryptologist, and is a member of the Cryptologic Hall of Honor.